



THREAT EVALUATION AND OFFENDER MANAGEMENT ADVICE REPORT

Case Number: x-ref 22-28411

Lead Investigator: Sgt. Smith CDINV / Sgt. Kiez SI

The following review was prepared by Det. Mark Horton, assigned to the Threat Evaluation and Offender Management Unit of the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) and an RCMP Certified Threat Specialist. Det. Horton has received specialized training in the area of behavioral analysis threat assessment, threat management and the analysis of anonymous threatening communications, including linguistic analysis.

In the course of this assessment I consulted with the RCMP Federal Policing Threat Assessment Section and S/Sgt. Sesley of the RCMP Behavioral Science Branch.

I was contacted on 03 February 2022 and advised of a threat received at the City of Ottawa identifying the current Mayor of Ottawa Jim Watson as the target. This occurred during an extended, high-profile demonstration in the city of Ottawa. The Mayor of Ottawa is a high-profile public figure and has been active in the media throughout this extended protest in the city.

I was asked to assess the perceived level of threat posed by the author of this communication of concern:

"Dear Jim Watson.

You need to arrest the politicians and city health officials who are jabbing us with needles and forcing mask mandates on our children.

Instead you are harassing these good people who are simply asking to live freely.

We will not tolerate any more harassment from your crazy bosses and their irrational government imposed mandates....

This is a dire warning for you.

Do not stand in our way.

Or you will get a bullet blasted through the back of your fucking head.”

The email communication was sent from a Gmail address:

[REDACTED]

Identical communications, save for the salutation, were received by Chief Sloly of the Ottawa Police Service.

OPS investigators have tentatively identified the sender of the email as [REDACTED] of Brooklyn, New York. [REDACTED] has previously sent mass emails in the US espousing COVID related conspiracy theories. He has been identified and charged in the US for making threats over email to a school in Utah. [REDACTED] has attempted to enter Canada several times, ostensibly to visit his ‘fiancée’ in Toronto, and subsequently is flagged by CBSA. US authorities have been contacted to assist in locating and investigating these threatening communications.

Analysis of the Contents of the Communications of Concern

Often an analysis of the language used in communications of concern can inform the perceived threat level.

The context in which the emails were sent is set against the backdrop of a high-profile news event that has attracted worldwide attention. There has been considerable reporting on this even in the US and elsewhere, and high-profile right-wing broadcast personalities and politicians have made public statements about the demonstration in Ottawa. The topic of vaccine mandates and other COVID pandemic related public health measures has been divisive and polarizing, particularly in the United States where we believe the threatener is located. The grievance, then, is not isolated and is shared by a relatively significant percentage of the population. This threatener expresses a broadly formed grievance against government and their adaption of public health measures. While the issue may be personal to him, he makes no suggestion that he has been personally affected beyond the inconveniences experienced by the majority of the population.

In this case the threat was received by email and received by at least two public figures whose contact information is relatively easy to obtain. This would suggest the threatener required a low level of effort to compose and deliver these threatening communications. Email is readily available and accessible medium of

communication – in this case the threatener did not take any extra steps to conceal his identity or anonymize the communications. No technical skill is required to deliver this threat. The threatener limited his communications to one method of delivery.

There is no suggestion that the threatener has access to any of the identified targets or possess any target specific or inside knowledge about the recipients of the threatening communication.

The threatener concedes in the email that the targets of the these threats themselves are not in a position to address his overarching grievance – *“We will not tolerate any more harassment from your crazy bosses and their irrational government imposed mandates....”*

The threatener uses the compensatory “we” to suggest or invoke membership in a larger organized group involved in this action – *“We will not tolerate” “Do not stand in our way”* but fails to identify this group and offers no bona fides to suggest that “they” are credible and capable of carrying out this threat.

The threatener appears to be trying to convince the recipient of their seriousness, rather than to truly convey actual intent to carry out the threat – *“This is a dire warning for you.” “Do not stand in our way.”*

The intent of the threat is unclear and contradictory – the threatener opens the communication with a demand that the recipient take action and *“...arrest the politicians and city health officials”* but then closes with a demand that the recipient *“...not stand in our way”* without describing what action their group will be taking that might be impeded by the recipients.

The threat is conditional – suggesting that the recipients need to take action to address the threatener's grievance *“You need to arrest the politicians and city health officials...”* The actual threat of violence (*“Or you will get a bullet blasted through the back of your fucking head”*) does not appear to be linked to these proposed actions, but are only tied to the demand that they *“...not stand in our way.”*

There is no deadline, sense of urgency or action imperative conveyed by the threatener, other than to *“...not stand in our way.”*

The threatener does appear to have a history of problematic behavioral history, with previous email campaigns involving COVID conspiracies, and possibly previous threats that resulted in criminal charges.

In the context of threats directed at public figures, research suggests that individuals who make overt threats towards public figures are less likely to make an approach or carry out an attack.

Opinion

On the presumption that [REDACTED] is the author of these communications of concern, and that he remains in the US, I believe the threat level in this matter to be LOW; [REDACTED] is unable to carry out the threatening action detailed in the emails as he is geographically isolated from the identified targets of the threats. To a threatener, distance is a liberator and disinhibitor in cases of threatening communications.

The threat was communicated, in an identical fashion, to at least two public figures associated with the ongoing demonstrations in Ottawa – it is possible that this communication of concern was received by other persons publicly associated with this protest.

The content of the threatening communication would suggest a LOW level of concern. This does not imply “no risk” but indicates the individual and situation should/may continue to be monitored.

Recommendations

The Mayor of Ottawa and the Chief of Police have both had a high profile in the media throughout this lengthy protest in the city and it is not surprising that they would be a lightning rod for frustrations and individuals who may hold extreme viewpoints. In this case the threatener appears to be geographically isolated from his targets, and thus lacks the ability to carry out the threatened behavior. Were we to receive a similar threat from an individual known to be in closer proximity to the recipients, the level of concern may be more elevated and more immediate actions may be proposed to ensure the safety of the targets.

Proactive protective measures are always more effective than reacting to an emerging threat. The current situation in the City of Ottawa with elevated tensions and the physical presence of demonstrator’s literally blocks from City Hall would suggest an elevated level of physical security and heightened vigilance around the Mayor (and the Chief of Police) would be prudent.

Investigators should continue all efforts to confirm the identity and location of the threatener with the assistance of US law enforcement.

[REDACTED] should be flagged with border officials and any attempt to cross into Canada should trigger an immediate re-assessment of the threat level in this case.

Horton, Mark

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